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ABSTRACT

An examination was conducted of the Marquette University Institute for Educational Leadership that uses the master teacher concept to assist both aspiring and experienced educational administrators to enhance their horizons and further their professional growth. Sixty-six of the 70 graduate credit enrollees returned their demographic data sheets and evaluation reports. Findings indicated that most participants took from each session some new ideas and/or suggetions for practice. Participants' viewpoints of the sessions conducted during the 1988-89 school year are identified for their perceptions about content, modes of presentation, and facilities. (SI)

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EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

THE MASTER TEACHER APPROACH

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THE MASTER TEACHER APPROACH

Development of the Institute

The idea of a Marquette University Institute for Educational Leadership originated at the keyboard of a piano. Concert artists frequently include as part of their tour the teaching of master classes to a group of aspiring musicians. Why then could not Marquette's School of Education use the master teacher concept to assist both aspiring and experienced educational administrators to enhance their horizons and further their professional growth?

The professional literature revealed that more than a few individuals could be recognized as significant contributors to current thinking in educational administration. They were the people who might well be regarded as master teachers in this field whose voices should be heard by experienced professionals desiring to update themselves within their busy work years as well as aspirants preparing for administration careers. The basic focus therefore became twofold - first, to bring master teachers to the students, enabling them to learn face to face from noted authorities and second, to schedule these sessions at a time convenient to both aspirants and practitioners. After some consultation, the meetings were scheduled on one Saturday per month for eight months, September through April from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Obtaining the services of master teachers was a delightful surprise. There was concern as to whether or not they would be

interested and if so, whether their schedules would accommodate the institute's available dates. From an original list of twenty individuals who were prominent in the field, eight were contacted by letter to ascertain their interest in doing the work of a master teacher. No less than all eight responded affirmatively. With that the machinery of implementation was placed in motion and the original idea became a reality.

Part of the implementation process included the successful marketing of the institute; administrators had to learn of it through some form of communication, and this communication had to be made to a sufficiently large geographical area. In this case, the Marquette University Division of Continuing Education acted as a co-sponsor of the institute, and its marketing expertise was a critical factor in the production of brochures and their distribution. Participant comfort was also a necessary component; such matters as adequate room arrangements, ease of access, refreshments, and parking were carefully attended to.

The first institute was held during the 1984-1985 school year and included eight master teachers. It opened with the late Paula Silver of the University of Illinois and included among others, Luvern Cunningham, Van Cleve Morris, Richard Gorton, Chester Nolte and Mel Heller. A registration of twenty-five people was needed to break even financially, but delight knew no bounds when it exceeded fifty.

The second institute was held during 1985-1986 again with eight master teachers including Thomas Sergiovanni, Martha

McCarthy, Jack Culbertson, James Lipham, John Hoyle, Rodney Muth, and David Clark. Enrollment this time was still encouraging but somewhat less than the previous year.

After a two year hiatus, another institute was scheduled for 1988-1989 following numerous inquiries and requests for a repetition. Master teachers for this session included Egon Guba, Yvonna Lincoln, Fenwick English, Cecil Miskel, Terrel Bell, Thomas McGreal, B. Dean Bowles, Lloyd Frohreich, and repeaters by popular demand Martha McCarthy and Thomas Sergiovanni. Initial registrations were quite low but when final enrollments exceeded seventy, success was assured; many practicing administrators were interested in continued professional growth and they or their school systems were willing to pay for it.

It should be noted that the third institute on occasion used two master teachers per session. It was learned earlier that a four and a half hour session for some teachers can be difficult from perspectives of both instructor and students. Two teachers, selected for their complementary or opposing views, utilize the time quite easily.

The institute was offered for graduate credit or for non-credit, as the participants elect. Many who enrolled for credit did so for the purpose of renewing certification. Credit enrollees were required to submit a term paper in addition to their attendance and the writing of session evaluation reports.

Evaluations of the institute by the participants were very favorable in terms of the overall concept; they varied in terms

of individual sessions and master teachers but this variance was generally related to individual participants and their unique backgrounds and preferences. Some master teachers were more successful than others with regard to capturing and retaining student interest throughout the four and a half hour session, and it can be observed that prolific writing does not necessarily assure good master teaching.

Institute Participants and Learnings

During the 1988-1989 institute, the institute coordinators wanted to identify the types of individuals who were attending and to investigate what the graduate credit enrollees perceived they were learning. In order to accomplish this, the session evaluation reports were revised and two questions were asked.

1. As specifically as possible, identify three main learnings that you gained or absorbed from this presentation.
2. Give an overall viewpoint of this session. Include perceptions about content, modes of presentation, facilities, and anything else you feel needs to be said.

Additionally, each credit enrollee was asked to complete a demographic data sheet. The results of that investigation follow.

Profile of Participants

Sixty-six of the seventy graduate credit enrollees returned their demographic data sheets. An analysis of those returned

found that 36 (55%) were male and 30 (45%) were female. The majority, 37 (56%), of the participants were employed in public schools; of the remaining, 23 (35%) were in Catholic schools and 6 (9%) were from Lutheran schools and technical schools. Fifty-five (83%) were involved in K-12 education and the remaining 11 (17%) were fulltime students or from higher education. As for teaching experience, 32 (48%) had between 6 and 15 years, 18 (27%) had 16+ years, 12 (18%) had between one and five years, and 4 (7%) had no teaching experience. Only five (8%) had no administrative experience. The largest group, 28 (42%) had between 6 and 15 years of administrative experience, 18 (27%) had 16+ years, and 15 (23%) had between one and five years. As for age distribution, 27 (41%) were between 40 and 49, 19 (29%) were between 50 and 59, 18 (27%) were between 30 and 39, 1 (1.5%) was between 20 and 30, and 1 (1.5%) between 60 and 69. Finally, a review of the participants' educational preparation found that 47 (71%) held master's degrees, 6 (9%) held educational specialist degrees, 9 (14%) held doctorates, and only 4 (6%) held baccalaureate degrees.

Participant Learnings

An analysis of the participants' narrative responses to the two evaluation sheet questions indicated that most participants took from each session some new idea(s) and/or suggestions for practice. However, the investigators found that the participants' responses to the second question requesting an overall viewpoint

about the content, mode of presentation, etc. revealed that/those learning(s) which made the greatest impression on them. It was in the response to this question that each participant highlighted by repetition some concept or suggestion for practice which had been noted in the first question's response. The specific learnings from the master teachers follow.

From Sergiovanni's presentation, "The Amoeba Theory: Practical Leadership for School Improvement," the participants noted the concepts of leadership by empowerment, the importance of the leader's vision, bonding of the leader and staff, and leadership for competence versus leadership for excellence. An overall reaction to the presentation was expressed by a female public elementary school principal who wrote that the "presentation was informative, well organized, and thought provoking - causing me to take self inventory of my leadership style as a principal."

Guba and Lincoln followed with a description of "The New Paradigm of Inquiry and Its Implications". From this the participants cited the importance of teacher input in the evaluation process and content and the helpfulness of the history of evaluation in understanding evaluation currently. Regarding teacher input, a female technical college associate dean wrote that "this model appears to be a means of solving conflict involved in educational decision making provided all groups have the potential for establishing equal power in this process." The group did express concern about the practicality of the model

proposed because of the significant time requirement. One Catholic elementary school principal expressed the concern when he noted the "time this process would take makes it impractical for use by the average principal."

For the third session, local master teachers, Kent Anderson, John Karls, and Vincent O'Conner, teamed up to present "Instructional Leadership in English, Mathematics, and Art". Following this meeting, the participants observed that the institute topic had moved from theory to practice, "a change of pace after two theoretically oriented sessions," as one director in a Catholic schools central office put it. The group also indicated that they had learned about the integration and interrelationship of the disciplines as well as the importance of a rich learning environment.

The last session for the first semester was taught by Fenwick English who addressed "What They Don't Tell You About School Administration, or How to Get Back at All of Your Tormentors and The Power of the Curriculum Audit". From the first part of English's presentation, the participants gained insights into aspects of the work of administration and found that humor was an effective tool for learning. Participant learnings during the second half of English's session were more focused than in any other master teacher's session. The curriculum audit and its standards were the principal learnings and this was best stated by a female public middle school assistant principal who wrote that the "curriculum audit [is] an excellent option for districts

which seek to refresh themselves from within."

Two University of Wisconsin, Madison, master teachers initiated the first meeting of the second semester. Lloyd Frohreich focused on "Financing Education" and B. Dean Bowles explored "Politics and Political Skills for School Leaders". In this session the participants felt that they developed a better understanding of state funding and the relationship of politics and funding. They learned as well that politics and education do go together as a female public high school principal noted when she wrote "politics [is] not...a dirty business, but...a necessary science for getting the job of education done."

The second meeting of the semester brought in master teacher, Tom McGreal, who discussed "Teacher Evaluation: Procedures and Processes". Two concepts stood out for the participants, the historical perspective of evaluation and the importance of getting teachers to talk about teaching. Regarding the latter, a public high school principal reiterated McGreal's point when he penned "the more people talk about teaching, the better they get at it."

The March meeting was team taught by Terrel Bell and Cecil Miskel who addressed "The Reform Movement in the 1980's: National Trends". The participants noted that they learned much about `behind the scenes in Washington', the Holmes Group work, and the importance of attracting quality teachers.

The final institute session featured Martha McCarthy who shared her expertise on "Recent Trends and Unresolved Issues in

School Law". The participants left that session having learned that reasonable policies and actions by school administrators will be upheld by the courts and that school law can be practical and understandable. One public middle school administrator summed up the general reaction of the group when he wrote: "[she] made me more sensitive to the rights of students and staff. As a school administrator I must take into account what courts said in school matters."

Generally, it was found that the institute participants came to the sessions looking for new ideas but also some kernel which they could take back to their situations and put to use the Monday after the Saturday meeting. This was expressed in different ways by many participants but was best expressed by a Catholic college associate dean when she wrote in her evaluation of the November session with Anderson, Karls, and O'Conner: "[The] practical nature of this one was refreshing." Additionally, they were also looking for some affirmation that at least some of what they were doing was right.

Conclusion

Finally, the fourth institute to be held during the 1990-1991 school year is in the planning stage. Eight master teachers are being identified by the Administration/ Supervision section, dates are being selected, and all of the other necessary arrangements are being made in cooperation with the Division of Continuing Education so that aspiring and practicing administrators will again have the opportunity to learn some

theory as well as suggestions for practice from master teachers face to face.